

AXIS

SECRET
August 19, 1918

THE PATTERN OF DEFEAT TODAY

The study of war has given scant attention to what may be called "the process of defeat". The explanation for this lies in the fact that wars usually have come to an end as the result of a short, vehement crisis, such as a battle decided in a few days, if not hours. The victor was thus determined immediately and beyond question.

In this century multi-dimensional warfare has created a type of defeat which spreads over a considerable period and in which distinct stages are discernible: total war tends toward long-range defeat, psychologically and otherwise. The best illustration of this is to be found in the German defeat in 1918. Certain observations concerning it appear capable of generalization and can be regarded as typical of the pattern of defeat today. There are reasons for assuming that events in Germany at this moment run parallel in some respects to those in 1918 and have the same portent.

The "incubation time" of defeat in the last war can be recognized in retrospect to have consisted of the period between the summer of 1917 and June 1918. During these months the destruction of the U-boat menace cleared the way for the mobilization of American power in Europe, while the German army exhausted itself in three offensive drives without gaining any decisive strategic advantage. In the same way the ultimate defeat of Germany is certain today. Her army has been expelled from Africa and immobilized in Russia, while the U-boat is again unable to prevent the accumulation of American power on the other side of the Atlantic.

Probability is against the vanquished or victor recognizing the turn in the tide as soon as it occurs. Modern war is too complex and too comprehensive. "Awareness" thus becomes the second stage in the pattern of modern defeat.

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As far as the German army was concerned, this stage of "awareness" was not reached in the last war until late July 1918. From then on signs of moral and disciplinary disintegration multiplied. It is important to note, however, that in the main the soldiers fought on stubbornly until the signing of the armistice. The stage of "collapse", when it came, was a phenomenon confined essentially to the home front, though it was initiated largely by soldiers and sailors who were in close contact with it. Developments took this form in spite of the fact that, compared with the army, German civilians were slow to recognize the turn of events. It did not dawn on many, even in very high places, until Ludendorff demanded an armistice. "Awareness" was therefore thrust so suddenly upon the German people that they could not withstand the shock and "collapse" followed almost immediately.

In 1943 the civilian sector of Germany has the dubious advantage over the front of being much more strongly conscious of the inevitability of defeat. Recognition of the certainty of defeat appears now to be in full swing. This time it has started at a moment much closer to the definite turning point. Contrariwise, considerably more time is likely to elapse between the realization of defeat and surrender.

This is not as paradoxical as it sounds, for, however strong the awareness of doom may be, powerful counter-agents are working for the continuation of the war. Among these must be counted the very experience of collapse in the last war. The "stab in the back" legend, which has been ardently propagated by Nazis and nationalist fanatics, may have conditioned the German home front against a quick collapse. In the first World War the collapse came when persons in high positions in Germany lost their nerve. Once again a "palace revolution" is the most likely vehicle for initiating the change inside Germany. The stigma which during the last 25 years has been attached to all those associated with the armistice

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of the peace, will, however, be a powerful deterrent to parties who might otherwise be ready to face facts and take the first steps.

Another reason for prolonging the war as long as it can be sustained militarily lies in the hope that delay might yet bring some unforeseeable intervention of fate that would alter the bleak outlook of defeat. The front presented by the United Nations has shown enough cracks to encourage the hope in Berlin that a favorable turn of events might suffice to shatter it.

Even when defeat is finally recognized without reservation, this tendency to look for opportunities to play off one opponent against the others should remain. It will then be motivated by the hope of securing a more favorable post-war settlement. Its natural form would be an earlier relaxation or abandonment of resistance on either the Eastern or Western front, thus permitting the approach to or even occupation of the home territory by that enemy who appears most disposed to deal generously with the vanquished. At this stage Russia has gained an advantageous position by committing herself, albeit somewhat vaguely, to a program that has considerable appeal for the German people.

The United States and Britain obviously are interested in hurrying the stage of collapse as much as possible and, if there should be any difference in the time when resistance relaxes on the two main fronts, to promote the earlier opening of Germany's western approaches. The principal lines of our policy are therefore clearly indicated:

1. Strive to the best of our ability to maintain the substance, or at least the appearance, of United Nations solidarity. Thus discourage German hopes to play off the Soviets against us.
2. Relieve the worst fears that now incline our enemies to resist to the bitter end by issuing a reassuring declaration of our war aims. Thereby also encourage them to seek association with the West.

COORDINATOR OF INFORMATION

Confidential INTEROFFICE MEMO

FROM: Silas B. Moore, Commander, U.S.N. DATE August 17, 1942

TO: Colonel William J. Donovan

SUBJECT: Axis agents

Encl.: Op-16-Z, CSS/00348, letter of August 17, 1942.

1. The enclosure is forwarded for your information.

2. A copy of this memorandum and the enclosure have been forwarded to Major Bruce. It is my opinion that this be made a matter of the utmost importance.

Respectfully,

S. B. Moore

Silas B. Moore

Copy to H. Linton

(El Hamilton)

CONFIDENTIAL

OS-16-1
OS/00348

August 17, 1942

MEMORANDUM for Commander Silas B. Moore, U.S.N.,
Office of Strategic Services.

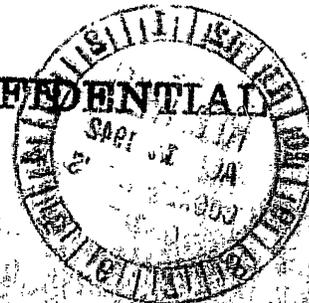
SUBJECT: Infiltration by Axis agents.

1. The Naval Attache at Istanbul has reported to this office that he has been notified by local informants that the Axis countries plan to have their agents employed in the expanding office of the Coordinator of Information. The appropriate American officials in Istanbul have been notified of this. The Naval Attache feels that if the report is reliable, it probably applies to other areas as well.

2. It is suggested that this information be brought to the attention of Colonel Donovan and Major Bruce.

John L. Riheldaffer,
Commander, U.S.N., Ret.

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COORDINATOR OF INFORMATION
270 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK

J.P.W.

MEMORANDUM

December 19, 1941

TO Mr. Barnes
c/o Mr. Sherwood

FROM J. P. Warburg

SUBJECT Axis Press Comments on Russian Campaign.

I attach five excerpts on the German and Italian press concerning the Russian campaign, which could be very usefully juxtaposed with reports of present developments.

COORDINATOR OF INFORMATION
270 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK

Dec. 18, 1941

Mr. Barnes

J. P. Warburg

The attached letter from Meusheng H. Lin, written at my request,
contains three very good suggestions concerning our Chinese propaganda.

s/c to Mr. Sherwood

COORDINATOR OF INFORMATION
270 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK

December 19, 1941

MEMORANDUM

TO Mr. Barnes
c/s to Mr. Sherwood

FROM J. P. Warburg

SUBJECT Suggested slug line for communique for military
comments on the Russian front.

1. FROM NIETZSCHE TO NITCHEVO.

2. IT IS REPORTED THAT HITLER HAS HAD TO RETIRE
TO THE SUMPTUOUS COMFORT OF BERCHTESGADEN
BECAUSE OF PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION. GERMAN
SOLDIERS ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT ARE EVEN MORE
EXHAUSTED BUT THEY DON'T HAVE ANY SUMPTUOUS
PLACE TO RETIRE TO. THEY JUST DIE IN THE
SNOW.

COORDINATOR OF INFORMATION

270 MADISON AVENUE

NEW YORK

MEMORANDUM

December 19, 1941

TO Mr. Barnes
c/c to Mr. Sherwood

FROM J. P. Warburg

SUBJECT Two Suggestions for Improving Relations with Russia.

1. Since Karl Marx was once the Herald Tribune's London correspondent, would it be possible to find one of his original dispatches and have the President send it to Stalin with a personal letter? If the Herald Tribune has no such document, has the Library of Congress any Marxian relics? It would undoubtedly make a great impression on Stalin if the President sent him something of this sort.

2. Could we get George Fielding Eliot to write a piece praising Stalin as a military genius and giving him the credit for what is happening in Russia? Such a piece should not be printed here, but should be cabled to someone like Steele or Sulsberger in Moscow as a "confidential" message for him to do nothing with for the time being. The GPU would undoubtedly report such a message to Molotov, who would then show it to Stalin. It might eventually be released from Moscow.

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File 3191
file

STATE DEPARTMENT CONSULAR REPORTS ON AXIS COUNTRIES

"Conditions in Germany, with Particular Reference
to the Munich Consular District, as of July, 1941"

Orsen N. Nielson

Prepared in Operations Unit
Intelligence Division
Office, Chief of Air Corps
October 28, 1941

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COPY 71

Nielson, Orsen N. - "Conditions in Germany, With Particular Reference to the Munich Consular District, As of July, 1941" A Special Report dated October 28, 1941 - from American Consul, Munich.

Mr. Nielson, in answer to questions propounded by Captain Richard D'Oyly Hughes and James T. Lowe in a conference on October 28, 1941, expressed the following opinions:-

Mr. Nielson agreed with the general correctness of the text of the R.A.F. City Dossier on Munich, and was able to verify the location of over half of the objectives shown on R.A.F. Munchen and District Map No. 33. He knew of no possibly worth-while objectives which were not shown on this map, but pointed out that G.U.3943, the Oberwiesenfeld Aerodrome, was no longer used for commercial air traffic and that this was now all handled through G.U. 4042, the Riem airport.

Mr. Nielson several times emphasized the importance of Munich as a railroad centre, but minimized its function as an industrial center. As a railroad center, Mr. Nielson said that Munich served as a (1) terminal for much of the traffic between Germany and the Balkans; and (2) as the main center for Italo-German commerce.

Mr. Nielson laid great emphasis on the importance of Munich to Italo-German trade. He said that a disruption of the extensive railway facilities of Munich would in all probability so curtail Italo-German traffic by way of the Brenner Pass that Italy would no longer

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be able to maintain its status as a belligerent. This, Mr. Nielson believed, was a highly desirable objective, as it would force Germany to extend her armies of occupation much farther on the continent of Europe, down to the tip of the boot of Italy, to prevent the country from being occupied by the British and to keep open the main route of supply for the German troops in North Africa. Mr. Nielson said that the heavy concentration of cars at Munich, literally thousands of cars daily, made that place a particularly vulnerable military objective.

On questioning, Mr. Nielson was strongly disinclined to accept the theory that the civilian population of Munich represented a very profitable bombing objective. As a result of the few (certainly not more than seven) light attacks while he was there, Mr. Nielson said that he had observed no signs of panic among the people. The civilian population, he said, exhibited only one definite reaction to these attacks, - that of ir-repressible curiosity. There was no panic, he insisted, before, during or after the bombing operations of the French, in the early part of the war, or the English, in the latter part.

Mr. Nielson further insisted that if after continued and prolonged bombing operations the workers of Munich desired to make a wholesale exodus they would be prevented from leaving their work by the government.

Mr. Nielson said that if a choice had to be made between bombing some one particular area repeatedly, and distributing the attack over

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a wider area to destroy industrial objectives scattered throughout a town, the former would have a far more devastating effect on the civilian population than the latter. A German Coventry, he intimated, would have far reaching repercussions all throughout Germany.

Mr. Nielson said that Munich was ringed by powerful searchlights (at least forty in number) and very noisy anti-aircraft guns (the number of which he said was impossible to estimate). Rumor had it, said Mr. Nielson, that Munich had been deprived of some of its anti-aircraft defences because of the need for them elsewhere and because of Munich's apparent immunity to large scale or frequent attack.

With regard to poisonous gas, Mr. Nielson said that Germany had apparently awakened very late to the possibility and probability that it would be used in this war. When he arrived in Munich in December, 1938, Mr. Nielson said, neither the people nor the government gave much thought to defense against air attack. However, he said that in March, 1939, both the people and the government began to take such a lively interest in precautions against gas attack that Mr. Nielson believed that the Germans firmly expected gas to be used in this war before it is over.

Mr. Nielson said that he knew of no outstanding examples of the use of camouflage in or around Munich. He said that the highways had not been painted, that he knew of no facilities for hiding the marshalling yards and railway stations by smoke screen or any other means, and that the only obvious use of camouflage in Munich was some rather

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clumsy screens around certain sections of some of the airfields. The only landmarks that might be of aid to an airman approaching Munich, Mr. Nielson said, were the River Isar, a range of hills about twenty miles on the side of the Riem airfield, and the cathedral in the heart of town, which had two tall domes.

The people of Munich, Mr. Nielson said, were not seriously concerned about the unexpected prolongation of the war, nor about any of the concomitant hardships. He said that the people were all well fed, adequately clothed, confident in ultimate victory, and willing to go on fighting indefinitely. A shortage of beer seemed to be the major hardship suffered by the people of Munich. This favored position of the Bavarians, Mr. Nielson said, was probably due to the fact that Bavaria was the main party headquarters, and also because the German authorities themselves felt that Bavarians had to be treated generously.

In conclusion, Mr. Nielson said that while there was certainly no unanimity of support for the Nazis in Bavaria, the Bavarians were patriotic Germans and would stand behind the Fuehrer to the last man if that were necessary to win the war. British propaganda had been ludicrous, Mr. Nielson said. In fact, Mr. Nielson expressed strong doubt that any propaganda could be disseminated which would have any desirable effect on the German people. If such were to be attempted, he said, it would have to guarantee (not promise) the German people a just peace. Mr. Nielson said that the Bavarian conception of a just peace was a Versailles-Germany, plus Austria and the Sudetenland, to-

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gether with reasonable disarmament, and a guarantee that Germany's rightful position of absolute parity with the great powers of the world would not be questioned. Mr. Nielson said he knew of no practical means of accomplishing this through propaganda. No propaganda, Mr. Nielson said, in conclusion, would be far better than the feeble and destructive attempts of the British prior to his departure from Munich.

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